Protection to SSI of Gujarat

*367. SHRI SURYAKANTBHAI ACHARYA:
SHRI JAYANTILAL BAROT:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the request of the State Government of Gujarat for rationalization of duty structure in respect of drugs and pharmaceuticals by bringing down the rate of excise duty from16 per cent to 8 per cent has been turned down;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any alternative steps are being taken by Government to protect the adversely affected small scale industries of Gujarat; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The request of the Government of Gujarat for reduction in excise duty on drugs and pharmaceuticals from 16 percent to 8 percent *ad-valorem* was examined. Keeping in view the fact that mean Cenvat rate of excise duty is 16% *ad-valorem* and reduction in excise duty on drugs to a rate lower than mean Cenvat rate would result in an inverted duty structure, distort the Cenvat credit chain and involve substantial revenue loss, it was decided not to make any change in excise duty structure and rate for drugs.

(c) and (d) As regards Small-scale units, under the general SSI exemption scheme, such units are eligible for full exemption from excise duty on clearance value upto Rs. 1 crore in a financial year.

Utilization of amount under IEPF

*368. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken to utilize the amount available under the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF);

(b) whether the amount sanctioned and disbursed to the Investors Associations is very late in a financial year;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the number of proposals received from the Investors Association during the last one year;

(e) the funds sanctioned for the year 2005-06 and the programme chalked out for the year 2005-06;

(f) the status of the total fund credited to IEPF till now;

(g) whether Government are considering to transfer the said fund to SEBI; and

(h) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA): (a) The following steps are being taken to utilize the amount available under Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF):—

(i) Education programmes through Media (Electronic as well as Print media);

(ii) Registration of voluntary associations or institutions or other organizations engaged in investor education and protection activities and providing financial assistance to them for projects on Investor's Education and Protection including research activities;

(iii) Coordinating with institutions engaged in Investor education, awareness and protection activities.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) During the year 2005-06, 76 (seventy six) proposals were received from various associations/organizations for registration/financial assistance.

(e) During the year 2005-06, a total amount of Rs. 1,93,30,279 has been sanctioned from out of the IEPF. The programme chalked out for the year 2005-2006 was as under:—

(i) Organization of two 'Training of Trainers' programme specially for the new organizations, preferably those which are active at Taluka level, even if such organizations had not been registered with the IEPF;

(ii) To undertake a media campaign by organizing three series of investor education publicity campaigns;

(iii) Organization of three investor melas to provide an opportunity to the capital market intermediaries and the investors to come together;

(iv) Organisation of three seminars on investor education.

(f) As per the information received from various Registrars of Companies, a total amount of Rs. 419,16,01,592.88 had been received towards IEPF upto 31.03.2006 and credited to the Consolidated Fund of India.

(g) No, Sir.

(h) Does not arise.

Restoration and maintenance work of monuments to private agencies

*369. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has decided to outsource the conservation of monuments by giving these monuments to private agencies for restoration and maintenance work;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken to rectify the same; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that restoration and maintenance work of these monuments is done departmentally?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The existing strength of 502 personnel under various conservation cadres is inadequate considering the volume of conservation works in the protected monuments handled by 24 circles of the Archaeological Survey of India. In addition to implementing its annual programmes, ASI has to honour the requests from State Governments to carry out conservation works in the state protected monuments as deposit works and also take up such works abroad as part of the bilateral agreements.

Therefore, keeping in view of the conservation needs of the 3667 protected monuments and sites, the Archaeological Survey of India has decided to outsource conservation works in selected monuments.

Almost all the conservation works are still undertaken departmentally except very few identified cases. Wherever outsourcing is resorted to, the work would have to be executed as per archaeological norms under the overall supervision of the Archaeological Survey of India.